



# H1N1 (Swine Flu) Facts

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## What is H1N1 (Swine Flu)?

H1N1 (swine flu) is a new type of flu that has spread widely throughout the world as well as every state in our country. This flu is similar to the seasonal flu that occurs every year. Most people who have become ill have recovered without medical treatment. Just like seasonal flu, however, H1N1 can lead to pneumonia, and in some cases, death. The new virus spreads more easily than seasonal flu, especially among those who are younger.

## Precautions and Symptoms

Like other types of flu, the H1N1 virus is spread when an infected person coughs or sneezes droplets near you and you take in the virus through your mouth, nose or eyes. You can also get the virus by touching a contaminated surface such as a countertop or doorknob, and then touching your mouth, nose or eyes.

The following simple actions are very effective ways to avoid getting or spreading all types of flu:

- Get vaccinated.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water frequently, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hands cleaners are also effective.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you get sick, stay home and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

**Symptoms** for this new type of flu are similar to the symptoms of the seasonal flu including fever, cough and sore throat. In addition, fatigue, lack of appetite, runny nose, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea have been reported.

## Treatment

Most flu cases can be treated at home, but if you have flu symptoms you may want to phone your health care provider. Your health care provider will tell you if they need to see you in person. If possible, stay home until you have not had a fever for at least 24 hours without taking fever-reducing medicines. Avoid contact with others, including your family, to keep from spreading the flu to others. Antiviral medications can be used to treat H1N1. These medications are used to prevent serious flu complications such as pneumonia and work best if started soon within two days of getting sick. Antiviral medications are available only by doctor's prescription.

## More Information

- Washington State Department of Health [www.doh.wa.gov/h1n1](http://www.doh.wa.gov/h1n1)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention hotline at **1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)**
- Washington State Department of Health recorded H1N1 Information at **1-888-703-4364**